

SAVING CHILDREN'S LIVES

The Economic Rationale for Investing in IMCI

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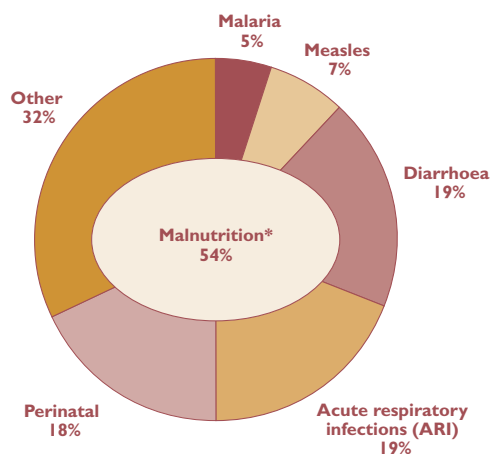


“Children are the rock on which our future will be built–” Nelson Mandela

IMCI - The Best Way to Invest in Child Health

Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI) is an efficient approach to prevent and treat the major causes of childhood illness and death and to promote children’s healthy growth and development. IMCI - which addresses the five common illnesses directly responsible for 70% of the 11 million child deaths that occur each year in the developing world - guides countries in planning and implementing effective child health strategies.

Roughly 8 million children under 5 die each year in developing countries from just five causes.
(World Health Organization)



Distribution of causes of 11.6 million deaths among under-5-year-olds in all developing countries, 1995.

IMCI Guides Countries to Take Action to Promote Child Health by:

- » Adapting the standard IMCI clinical guidelines to the country’s needs, available drugs, policies, and local foods and languages.
- » Upgrading care in local clinics by training health workers in new methods for examining and treating the whole child and for effectively counseling parents.
- » Ensuring that enough of the right, low-cost medicines and simple equipment are available for appropriate care.
- » Upgrading care in hospitals for children too sick to be treated in clinics.
- » Working with communities to prevent disease, help families to use appropriate home treatment and get children to clinics and hospitals when necessary.



The Economic Rationale for IMCI

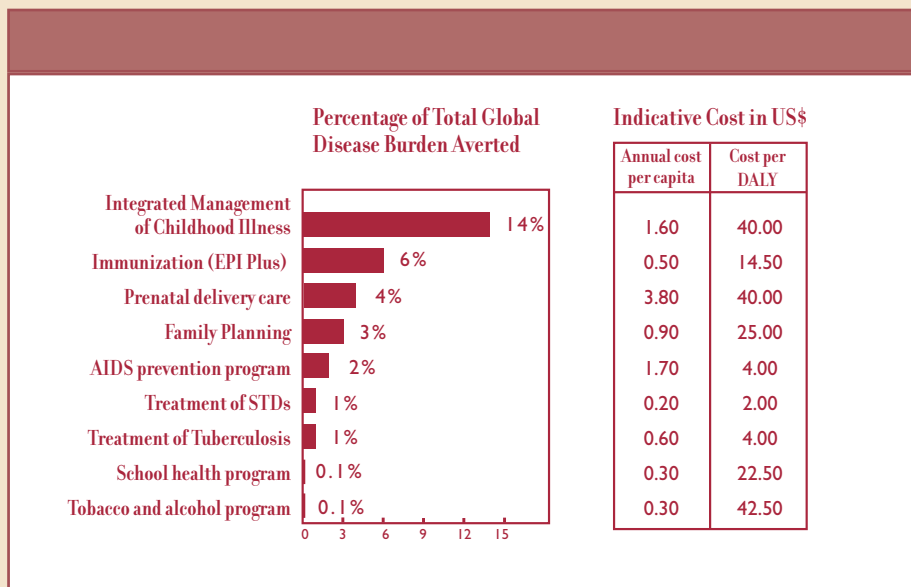
IMCI is an effective, affordable, and efficient way to improve the survival and

health of children - every country's most valuable resource for the future.

IMCI is one of the best investments a country can make

IMCI ranks among the 10 most cost-effective interventions in both low- and middle-income countries, with the potential to have the greatest impact of the global burden of disease at a

relatively low cost (World Bank, 1993). It maximizes the impact of health spending by targeting the five preventable conditions that cause 80 percent of childhood illness.



IMCI can avert 14% of the global burden of disease at a cost of about US\$1.60 per capita per year, or \$40 per DALY (disability-adjusted life year). Source: World Bank, "Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector Strategy Paper," 1997, p. 61.

IMCI resource requirements are mostly investment costs

Experience shows that the bulk of resources required to implement IMCI are start-up investment costs; the recurrent costs of IMCI's

integrated approach are proving to be relatively low and stable, compared with single-disease approaches.

IMCI generates cost savings

IMCI's integrated training and management systems reduce program costs. IMCI also lowers treatment costs by reducing inappropriate use of

drugs: a 1994 study in Kenya showed that IMCI reduced per child treatment costs (from \$0.44 to \$0.16).

» IMCI Saves Costs...

In Zambia, IMCI reduced the inappropriate prescription of antibiotics for diarrhea and the common cold in health facilities from 47% to 10%.

In Uganda, IMCI reduced the number of drugs in standard practice from 50 to 11, reducing the average cost per child from US\$0.82 to \$0.17 (WHO).

IMCI improves the impact of health reform

IMCI adds value to the health reform process by injecting improved quality of care into health care systems. Introducing IMCI also

provides an opportunity to review national policy issues, including treatment and drug protocols.

IMCI reinforces other key health initiatives

IMCI can support the implementation of other key health interventions. It provides a particularly efficient mechanism for furthering the global Roll Back Malaria (RBM) initiative.

In fact, WHO estimates that IMCI could avert over 400,000 malaria deaths a year among children in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

IMCI increases quality and utilization of health services

Growing evidence indicates that improving the quality of care through IMCI increases appropriate demand for health

services: health facility utilization rates increased by 20 to 40 percent after introducing IMCI in one area of Tanzania

IMCI mobilizes community action for child health

Studies show that 40 to 80 percent of child deaths occur at home (MOH, Tanzania 1997).

IMCI can save children's lives by promoting community involvement in:

- » improving the effectiveness of household care of children,
- » helping parents determine when and where to seek care outside the home, and
- » preventing common childhood diseases.

In Bolivia, mothers/caretakers who knew at least 2 danger signs requiring a child to go immediately to the health center increased from 7% to 70% after health care providers received IMCI training.

» Your Support is Essential to Save Children's Lives

» WHERE WE ARE

Despite a 15 percent decrease in child mortality during the 1990s, each year more than 11 million children still die in developing countries from the diseases addressed by IMCI. Since 1995, more than 60 countries have introduced IMCI. This represents about half - but only half - of the countries that can benefit from it.

» THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Moving forward requires political and financial support - at all levels - to ensure full implementation of IMCI in every country where children are at risk.

» HOW YOU CAN HELP «

Mobilize human and financial resources for IMCI in health facilities, communities, and in the home, by involving stakeholders, including NGOs and the private sector, at all levels.



Make child health a national priority

Place this crucial issue at the top of the national policy agenda, supported by significant budget allocation.

Dialogue with Ministry of Health and donors

(WHO, World Bank, UNICEF and bilateral agencies) to develop IMCI investment strategies for your country.



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